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Figure 12-6.—Picture sequence in a picture page layout.

important aspects of the subject in greater clarity and detail than would have appeared in reality to an observer. Only in the form of a close-up can a face, pair of hands performing a certain function or small but important object appear monumental, interesting and in proper proportion to its significance to the story.

- **Horizontal and vertical views.** Shoot both horizontal and vertical views of your subject — with the same action portrayed when possible. This provides more latitude when you construct a picture story layout. You can usually crop long shots during the layout process to meet design requirements, but not medium and closeup shots.

Tentative and Final Layout

Picture stories are not just a haphazard gathering of photographs. The photographs used must have specific functions. The use of one photograph, as opposed to another, is closely aligned with the layout design. Even as you take photographs, you should consider the picture story layout.

The lead photograph is not necessarily the first picture in chronological sequence, but the picture that contains the essence of the story. Within the layout, the lead photograph is usually the largest and placed to attract the reader's attention.

Body photographs are those that actually communicate the story. They must use compositional techniques to present interesting and stimulating photographs. The editors should strive to present the photographs in different sizes and formats as well as presenting rights and lefts, highs and lows, longs and close-ups, and at the same time, using the minimum number of display elements. Allow for maximum latitude when selecting your visuals.

You also should consider end photographs during the planning phase of the picture story. Not all picture stories have definite endings, but all should bring the reader to the significance of the story.

After accomplishing the preceding tasks, you are ready to take photographs. The law of averages indicates that the more you take, the better your chances are of getting exactly what you want. However, if you are properly prepared, your photographs will not be a number of unrelated shots, but will be several sequences that cover the specific picture ideas listed on the script. This method was used during the first landing of the space shuttle (fig. 12-6). By covering your assignment in this manner, you will have a variety of visuals that can be used in a picture page layout.

Equipment Readiness

Speed is the essence of news photography, especially spot news that just happens. Therefore, it is crucial that you always have a ready camera on hand

with an adequate supply of film, flash and associated equipment. When a spot news event occurs, you will not have much time to get your gear together and check it out. This means you must start your day off with a complete check of the equipment available to you.

When possible, keep two cameras ready — one loaded with black-and-white film and the other with color slide film (for release to electronic media).

As you read in Chapter 11, you should keep your camera free from dirt, dust and moisture and also handle it with care. Store it in a readily accessible place in its carrying case when not in use.

Self-Confidence

Gaining an attitude of self-confidence is one of the most difficult and important aspects of becoming a good news photographer. A “personality for the profession” is a prerequisite for anyone who wants to become proficient in the field of photojournalism.

To succeed, you must look upon occurrences with an objective view. The knowledge of the mechanics of photography is not enough. You must have an inquisitive nature that inherently causes you to want to know more about what is going on around you. Diligence, study and practice are necessary to use the tools of the trade proficiently; aggressiveness and the will to understand the motivations of others will aid you in your quest for competence.

Those who have a thorough knowledge of their field and consistently display such attributes as honor, finesse, diplomacy, courtesy and honesty, as well as straightforwardness, automatically develop self-confidence.

All too often a photographer misses pictures of great pictorial value because of the lack of aggressiveness. Upon receipt of an assignment, your whole attitude must be that of determination. Come what may, you must get photographs. Navy photographers and journalists are frequently in contact with notable personalities from military organizations, local and federal governments, foreign countries, private industry, and hundreds of people from all walks of life who at some time or another have had an association with the Navy or other armed forces.

Almost without exception, all of these people may be photographed without incident under nearly any circumstance. Fear of what is ahead and fear of standing in the shadow of great people cannot be a part of the personality of the news photographer. You should be

respectful, as appropriate, but you should never feel subservient or inferior. Finesse, courtesy and straightforwardness in pursuing the job at hand immediately result in cooperation as well as quick action in seeing that the mission is accomplished.

People being photographed rely on the photographer's ability to get the coverage desired and usually await the photographer's instructions. Photographers and reporters are not unfamiliar sights on the horizon to the VIP. When people have reached a point in life when they have become public figures, they are conscious that they no longer enjoy the privacy of the average citizen. Therefore, knowing they are news, they are ready and willing to assist members of the working media. However, they cannot do this until you have presented yourself. When your presence is noted, your VIP subject knows, through many years of experience, that your job must be done with speed in order to meet deadlines.

In presenting yourself to a subject, the initial introduction normally is made by an aide or assistant; however, there are times when you must do this yourself. An honest and courteous approach at a diplomatic moment can be done easily. Simply remain in close proximity to your subject and await the earliest break in conversation; then step forward and state your name, rate, place of duty and your reason for being there. When you are acknowledged, take the minimum time necessary to get your photographs. Work with sureness, deftness and thoroughness. If you feel you did not get a photograph, bring this to the attention of your subject immediately. Often you will find that straightforwardness gets you a second chance that so seldom comes to the news photographer. If it is impossible to shoot another photograph at that particular moment, keep your eyes open and remain on the alert. Another opportunity may present itself, so be ready for it.

CREATING GOOD PHOTOGRAPHS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Describe the basic elements of creating good photographs and the inherent security and safety considerations.

Creating good photographs (news, feature or otherwise) depends heavily on the imagination and know-how of the person behind the camera. You must have a storehouse of imaginative ideas for presenting simple, yet interesting photographs that emphasize a definite point of view. The shot must have both visual and emotional impact and offer the viewers a



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Figure 12-7.—Feature photograph offering a unique view.

perspective they do not always see (fig. 12-7). All of the qualities mentioned are a must for a news photographer striving for good photographic composition.

Essentially, photographic composition is a harmonious combination of a main subject and its supporting elements. This means you must be able to recognize these elements and then arrange them into the photograph that will tell your story.

Learning the art of good composition is similar to mastering any other skill. First you must understand the rudiments. Then, through much practice and attention, you develop your talent to the highest degree of perfection possible.

In the early stages of learning, we depend almost exclusively on what we can see and hear, imitating what has been done before. Much can be learned about composition by studying various works of art and collections of good photographs. Each one offers an example of how to present a subject in an effective and interesting manner. By attempting to duplicate some of these photographs, you can acquire an understanding of the basic elements of composition.

The proper placement of the subject within the space of the photograph is one of the most important elements of good composition. Whenever possible, you should select and arrange the subject elements, choosing the viewpoint and lighting conditions that present the subject best. You also should arrange the subject in the photograph in such a way as to clearly and predominantly be the main point of interest. The main idea of the photograph should be recognizable immediately to anyone viewing your photograph.

In aiming for good composition, you should learn and use the following principles as guides: 1 Simplicity

- Point of interest
- Compositional lines
- Balance
- Forms
- Rhythm or pattern
- Tone
- Depth perception
- Action
- Security and safety considerations

Your awareness, application and practice of these principles when composing a scene will assist you greatly in making an interesting presentation of your subject.

SIMPLICITY

Frequently, the simplest arrangement of your subject matter makes the most interesting presentation. Although each photograph consists of numerous small parts and contributing elements, none of these should appear conspicuous or portray more interest than the main object. The main object is the reason for making the photograph in the first place; all other elements should merely support and emphasize it. The scene should not be cluttered with a confusing number of objects and lines that detract from the subject. You should select a viewpoint that eliminates surrounding distractions so the principal subject is readily recognized. If numerous lines or shapes are competing for interest with the subject, it may be difficult to recognize the main object or determine why the photograph was made.

Study the scene from all angles and decide exactly what you want to show; then strive to maintain this single idea as clearly as possible by eliminating unimportant or distracting elements from the photograph. Keeping the arrangement simple makes the job of composition easier and the photograph more interesting.

POINT OF INTEREST

With few exceptions, most photographs should have a single point of interest that tells the viewer this is the reason for taking the photograph. All other details support the point of interest. The point of interest is the point to which the eyes are drawn (fig. 12-8). If there is

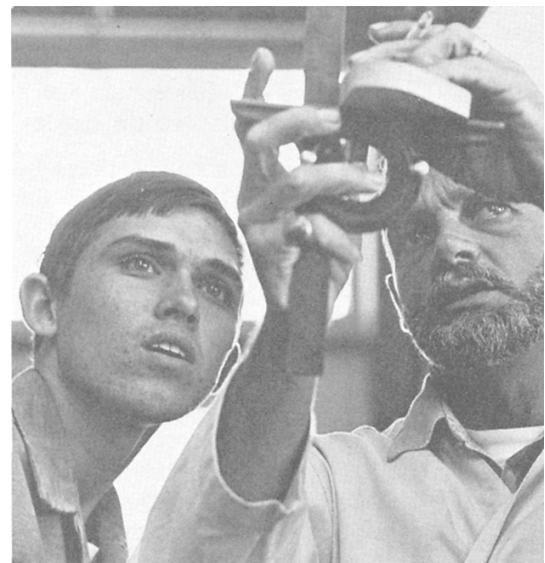


Figure 12-8.—The eyes of the viewer are drawn to the point of interest.

nothing in the photograph to attract attention to a particular area, the eyes wander throughout the scene. The point of interest maybe a single object or numerous ones arranged so that attention is directed to one definite point.

Lines, shapes, human figures, and so forth, should be directed so that they look or move toward the point of interest in the picture. If you have a group of people gathered around a table, keep the interest intact and centralized by having them look at each other or at one individual of the group. A perfect example of this is *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci. This unity of interest causes the observer's eyes to be drawn to the same point. Human figures attract attention more strongly than most other subject matter.

For instance, a photograph showing a person standing at a distance in front of a building may leave the observer wondering whether the person or the building is the main subject. When you include people in a scene, do not photograph them looking directly at the camera. When people look directly at us, we normally return the gaze by looking directly into their eyes. However, when they look in another direction, our attention is drawn from them to the point at which they are looking. Thus if people are grouped around a piece of machinery or an aircraft (the main object of the photograph), have them look at the object, rather than at the camera.

Rule of Thirds

Point of interest, as used in this section, is frequently called the center of interest. It is called "point" at this time simply to prevent giving the impression that it would be located in the center of the photograph space.

Although good composition can at times be obtained by placing the point of interest in the geometrical center of the photograph area it is a good idea to avoid placing it there. The frequently it divides the photograph into equal halves and makes it difficult to create a feeling of balance. Some photographers draw lines on the ground glass, dividing the photograph into thirds both vertically and horizontally, and thereby locate the point of interest at one of the four intersections of these lines. This division is sometimes referred to as the rule of thirds (fig. 12-9) — a concept briefly covered in Chapter 8. You will find that one of these intersections is the best location for the point of interest and gives the best feeling of balance to the composition of the photograph. Most of the attention should be attracted to and held at this point. An artistic feeling for

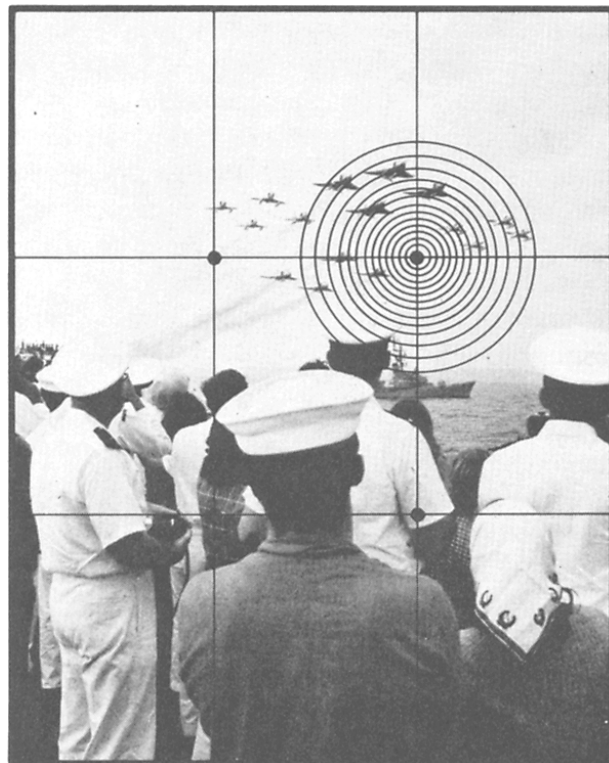


Figure 12-9.—The rule of thirds

arrangement is an invaluable aid in composing a scene in order to make a striking photograph.

If the principal object is too close to one edge, appears top-heavy or if it in any way leaves the observer feeling that it is misplaced in the photograph, the point of interest should be moved to another location. You also may change the camera angle to include another object and balance the composition.

Leading Lines

One of the most common techniques in directing attention toward the point of interest is the use of leading lines, shapes or patterns. You can use leading lines to convey psychological impressions; curved lines lend grace to a photograph and strong horizontal lines combined with vertical lines indicate strength and power. The leading line may be a road, an armor leg, a shoreline, a patch of light or dark tones in the scene, or a line of sight (fig. 12-10). A good leading line is one that starts near a corner of the scene and continues unbroken until it reaches the point of interest. It should end at this point; otherwise, attention is carried beyond the main object in the photograph.